

Dear Chairman Powell and the FCC:

I am here in Iraq with the Marine Corps right now, trying to establish a fledgling independent press in Ramadi... I regard a free, independent and decentralized media as a personal issue and at the core of a democratic system. We must nurture, not undermine such attributes of America's media panopoly.

Please hold official public hearings in Virginia.

Before the disastrous 2003 decision to weaken media ownership rules (which a federal court has now overturned), you held only one official public hearing. Further, FCC officials met behind closed doors 71 times with major broadcasters – but only five times with public interest groups. And to justify your actions, you used deceptive, industry-sponsored research data.

The will of Big Media has been heeded at the expense of American citizens and democracy itself. This has to end. Before you rewrite the ownership rules, I demand an official public FCC hearing in my state, impartial and verifiable research, and transparent debates.

It is time to put the needs of democracy – a diverse, skeptical, independent and competitive media system – ahead of profit-hungry media giants.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Morgenstein
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